



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

INSTANCES OF THE EFFECTS OF MUSICAL SOUNDS
ON ANIMALS.

BY ROBERT E. C. STEARNS.

(Continued from p. 29, Vol. XXIV., 1890.)

CATS AND MUSIC.

MR. GEORGE GUION, of Ventnor, Isle of Wight, referring to a cat owned by his friend, a Capt. Noble, says:

"If any one in her presence commences whistling a plaintive air Brownie will presently go to him, climb into his lap, and raising herself on her hinder legs will put her mouth close to that of the whistler. Captain Noble's view of the motive is, that the cat imagines the performer to be in pain, and thus endeavors to express her sympathy. One day when sitting round the table after dinner, we each for experiment attracted the animal in turn, who on the above supposition must have thought we were suffering from an epidemic, as each of us in succession exhibited the same symptoms. It is necessary that the air whistled should be of a plaintive character, as I found by commencing a lively measure, which I had to change. In my boyhood we had a cat which had a habit very similar. If I laid myself down on the sofa, and made a moaning sound, the cat would jump up and hover about me, as if anxious to find out what was the matter."

Another party writes: "Sometime since I had an ordinary tortoise-shell cat, which had a peculiar fondness for the tune known as "Rode's Air." One day I chanced to whistle it, when, without any previous training, she jumped on my shoulder, and showed unmistakable signs of pleasure by rubbing her head against mine, and trying to get as near my mouth as possible. I have tried many other tunes, but with no avail."

Captain Noble, of Forest Lodge, Maresfield, England, whose cat "Brownie" is referred to by Mr. Guion, in response to the

incident above given says: "By-the-by, I don't know whether

Rode's Air' is a lively or plaintive tune, but only one of the latter kind affected my poor old 'Brownie.' I used as a rule to whistle the 'Last Rose of Summer,' when I wished her to perform. I never could satisfy myself as to her motive in putting her mouth to mine. The most feasible conjecture that I was able to make seemed to be that she imagined me to be in pain, and in some way tried either to soothe me, or to stop my whistling."

F. C. R., of Gwasted, in commenting on one of the instances above related say: "We too have a cat which is very sensible of the whistling of tunes, and which will, even when with her young kittens, show great uneasiness immediately after the whistling commences, and rise and leave them to follow the person about, ending by trying to seek for the unaccountable sounds in the very mouth of the performer. Still, unlike the cat of 'Musicus,' she seems to experience more uneasiness than pleasure."

Then follows E. J. T., who says: I can give another instance from personal knowledge. A few years ago my brother had a favorite cat, which, when he whistled a tune, would follow him round the room, and climbing up on him would touch his mouth with her paw, and rub her head against his face, all the time purring with pleasure. I may add that this musical taste is *not* hereditary, for a grandchild of this cat, now in our possession, shows the greatest antipathy to music; a few notes on the piano or concertina are enough to rouse her from her slumbers on the hearth-rug, and drive her to the door, mewing loudly to be let out."

Another illustration is furnished by Mr. Oborn, relating to the power of music on English cats. He writes:

"I have a cat that has apparently great fondness for music. Whenever any of the family or a stranger commences playing on the piano, and if the tune is at all lively, she fondles and purrs and evinces the greatest pleasure imaginable, and sometimes becomes so excited that she will jump on to the keys and rub herself against the hands of the person playing."

A lady friend of mine residing in California has observed similar actions on the part of a cat, when the piano is playing in its presence. Whether a Thomas or Tabby cat I did not ask.

Another friend, a lady residing in Washington, D. C., at one time owned a cat that acted in a very peculiar manner upon hearing the music of a piano. When the strain was rather soft and low, the cat appeared to be pleased with it, would climb up into the lady's lap, reach up her head and rub it against the lady's shoulder or chin, but when in the course of the time a passage was reached that was in a high key, with considerable emphasis, pussy became intensely excited, and would put her head against the lady's cheek with a good deal of force, or jump down and run to the piano, and climb up on the person playing, and get up on the instrument in such a fiercely aggressive way that the performer, through fear of being scratched or bitten, would stop playing.

Referring to the effect of whistling upon a cat, as observed by E. J. T., Mr. George O. Howell says, "A relative of mine has a cat, a noble animal, rejoicing under the refined name of Thomas. This creature dislikes to hear any one whistle. But one morning, when he was fast asleep, I whistled loudly. It acted like magic. Thomas started up in an instant, looked very bewildered, and decamped from the room at full speed."

From dogs and cats, the canine and feline, let us turn to the porcine.

PIGS AND MUSIC.

"In old churches and cathedrals we sometimes find a carving on the miserere of a pig playing upon a bagpipe and the little pigs dancing around. This seems to indicate a popular notion (at least in times gone by) that pigs have no ear or taste for music; such a notion, however, seems to be not quite correct, for I once saw four or five great bony pigs standing at a garden gate, listening with the most evident pleasure to the sweet sounds of a wandering German band. They stood in a row, in perfect stillness, with heads bent a little on one side to catch the melody; and from time to time gave utterance to their delight in a gentle grunt of

satisfaction. The melody that charmed their breasts was one which rose and fell in gentle and continual waves of sound ; not very attractive perhaps to educated ears, but certainly riveting the attention of these untaught creatures, whose desires are commonly supposed to be confined to the quantity and quality of their food, rather than to the enjoyment of the purer delights of sweet sounds."

In proceeding with the domestic animals it will be seen that the bovine group are entitled to a share of attention.

MUSICAL COWS.

"That pigs are not the only animals who take a delight in musical sounds, may be proved by the following incident of which I was a witness on more than one occasion. Opposite to our house was a large field in which some twelve or thirteen cows were put during the summer months. One day a German band commenced to play on the road which divided the house from the field. The cows were quietly grazing at the other end of the field, but no sooner did they hear the music, than they at once advanced towards it, and stood with their heads over the wall attentively listening. This might have passed unnoticed ; but upon the musicians going away, the animals followed them as well as they could on the other side of the wall, and when they could get no further stood lowing piteously, etc. * * * * So excited did the cows become, that some of them ran round and round the field to try and get out, but finding no outlet returned to the same corner where they had lost sight of the band, and it was some time before they seemed satisfied that the sweet sounds were really gone. It seems a strange coincidence that both the pigs and cows were charmed by music produced by a German band."

OXEN AND MUSIC.

"I have often noticed the power music has over oxen. The other day we had a brass band playing in our garden. In a field adjoining were four Scotch oxen ; when the band struck up,

they were at the far end of this, a nine-acre field, quite out of sight, the field being very uneven. They set off full trot to the garden wall, put their necks over, and remained so till the tune was finished, when they went back to graze; but as soon as it struck up again, they put their heads over again. This went on till the band left, after which they ate little all day, and were continually lowing."

Before leaving the bovines, it may be worth noticing that the most definite statement, the most direct and practical testimony we have as to the effect of music upon members of this group may be found in that famous book known as "Mother Goose's Melodies." Therein it is stated:

"There was a piper had a cow
And had no hay to give her;
He took a pipe and played a tune,
'Consider, Cow! Consider!'

"The cow considered very well,
And gave the piper a penny,
And bade him play that other tune,
'Corn-ricks are bonny!'"

It will be observed that she was a *hard money* cow, while the piper offered only notes!

"There are many anecdotes which show that the ox, or cow, has a musical ear. The carts in Corunna, in Spain, make so loud and disagreeable a creaking sound with their wheels, for the want of oil, that the governor once issued an order to have them greased; but the carters petitioned that this might not be done, as the oxen liked the sound, and would not draw so well without their accustomed music."

"Prof. Bell assures us that he has often, when a boy, tried the effect of the flute on cows, and has always observed that it produced great apparent enjoyment. Instances have been known of the fiercest bulls being calmed into gentleness by music."

It will be seen that a very liberal definition must be conceded to the terms music and musical sounds, when the creaking of a

cart wheel is referred to as "accustomed music."¹ The instance here quoted may be more properly regarded as illustrating the relation of certain sounds to the ordinary routine, and said sounds having been continued for a long time, until they became a permanent factor in the experience of these animals, the discontinuance caused, perhaps, a feeling of strangeness and discontent.

SHEEP AND MUSIC.

The following pleasing anecdote of the power of music is given by the celebrated Haydn. "In my early youth," says he, "I went with some other young people equally devoid of care, one morning during the extreme heat of summer, to seek for coolness and fresh air on one of the lofty mountains which surround the Lago Maggiore, in Lombardy. Having reached the middle of the ascent by daybreak, we stopped to contemplate the Barro-mean Isles, which were displayed under our feet, in the middle of the lake, when we were surrounded by a large flock of sheep which were leaving their fold to go to the pasture.

"One of our party, who was no bad performer on the flute, and who always carried the instrument with him, took it out of his pocket. 'I am going,' said he, 'to turn Corydon; let us see whether Virgil's sheep will recognize their pastor.' He began to play. The sheep and goats, which were following one another towards the mountain, with their heads hanging down, raised them at the first sound of the flute, and all with a general and hasty movement turned to the side from whence the agreeable noise proceeded. They gradually flocked round the musician, and listened with motionless attention. He ceased playing, and the sheep did not stir.

"The shepherd with his staff now obliged them to move on; but no sooner did the fluter begin again to play than his innocent auditors again returned to him. The shepherd, out of patience, pelted them with clods of earth, but not one of them would move. The fluter played with additional skill; the shepherd fell into a passion, whistled, scolded, and pelted the poor

¹ But then Will Carleton's verses are sometimes called poetry.

creatures with stones. Such, as were hit by them began to march, but the others refused to stir. At last the shepherd was forced to entreat our Orpheus to stop his magic sounds; the sheep then moved off, but continued to stop at a distance as often as our friend resumed the agreeable instrument.

“The tune he played was nothing more than a favorite air, at the time performing at the opera in Milan. As music was our continual employment, we were delighted with our adventure; we reasoned upon it the whole day, and concluded that physical pleasure is the basis of all interest in Music.”

Having given much time to the domesticated quadrupeds, the domesticated bipeds, our friends who wear feathers, must be permitted to give their testimony.

I am again indebted to Prof. Davidson for many interesting anecdotes, all the more so as the instances recited have the authority of his personal knowledge, or that of others known to him as truthful and intelligent.

BIRDS AND MUSIC.

First relating to pigeons. “It must have been about 1841 when I had gotten rid of about fifteen pairs of pigeons of different varieties; but I retained a fine white ‘hen pigeon’ because we all felt a kind of attachment towards her,—the younger brothers and sisters and my mother. I was going through the task of learning the flute from my father’s teaching; I had only a one-keyed flute, but of very sweet tone. One white pigeon had always made herself at home about the back part of the house, frequently leaving the large pigeon house and coming into the kitchen; but after the sale of all the other pigeons she was continually amongst our feet, and making close friends with one and all. In the course of my fluting we noticed that this white pigeon became very much excited over one particular tune, but as to others she seemed wholly unconcerned. So, to please the younger portion of the family, as well as my mother, I frequently cleared a space for the pigeon to perform in and commenced to play. She would begin to circle round and round in the most excited man-

ner, in a space say six feet or more in diameter, crouching low, spreading out her wings, and cooing in the most intense tones. It was very interesting to us all, and the louder I played the more excited became the bird. She never exhibited any feeling for any other tune. Very frequently my mother would ask a neighbor or two in to see the performance, and to still further test the pigeon's idiosyncrasy, I would begin to play while she was outside, when she would instantly leave her corn and come in for the music. Two of my sisters write me that the tune was 'Rule Britannia,' and that the pigeon was then ten years old. Subsequently I purchased other pigeons and mated her, after which she evidently considered music too frivolous for such aged maternity."

(To be continued.)